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Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 IO-10 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 SAM-01 ACDA-05 CU-02 AID-05 OMB-01 /092 W
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R 1112402Z JUN 75
FM AMEMBASSY SANAA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5702
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMEMBASSY LONDON
USCINCEUR

C O N F I D E N T I A L SANA 1460

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, YE
SUBJECT: YARG REGIME PREPARES FOR ITS FIRST ANNIVERSARY

1. SUMMARY: YARG HAS BEGUN PREPARATIONS FOR NEW ELECTIONS WHICH WILL NOT BE HELD FOR A NUMBER OF MONTHS. FILLING OF VACANT COMMAND COUNCIL SEATS AND MINOR CABINET RESHUFFLE TO DROP MININT EXPECTED SHORTLY. MEANWHILE GOVERNMENT INTENT ON CONTINUING EXPAND ITS AUTHORITY OVER SHAIKHS, JUNE 13 CELEBRATIONS WILL BE LOW-KEY AND CIVILIAN WITH HAMDI, AT PEAK OF POPULARITY, TO MAKE "IMPORTANT PATRIOTIC SPEECH".

2. YARG REGIME UNDER PRESIDENT HAMDI HAS TAKEN NUMBER OF STEPS RELATED TO PREPARATIONS FOR FIRST ANNIVERSARY OF ITS JUNE 13, 1974 "CORRECTIVE MOVEMENT".

3. MOST IMPORTANT HAS BEEN ACTIVITY IN PAST TWO WEEKS TO PREPARE FOR NEW ELECTIONS TO CONSULTATIVE ASSEMBLY. PRESENT ASSEMBLY HAS NOW PASSED, AFTER LONG DELAY, NEW ELECTION LAW WHICH PROVIDES FOR DIRECT ELECTIONS IN 128 CONSTITUENCIES.
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ASSEMBLY HAS ALSO PICKED, FROM AMONG NINE CANDIDATES PROVIDED BY COMMAND COUNCIL, THREE-MAN SUPREME ELECTORAL COMMISSION WHICH WILL APPOINT LOCAL COMMISSIONS IN EACH CONSTITUENCY TO DRAW UP ELECTORAL ROLLS. COMMISSION IS HEADED BY CONSERVATIVE, HONEST EX-PRIMIN ABDALLAH AL-HAJRI WHICH MEMBERSHIP OF RESPECTED ELDERLY EX-SANA GOVERNOR AMIN ABD AL-WASI' NU'QHAN, AND DEPUTY ASSEMBLY SPEAKER YUSUF AL-SHAHARI, WHO IS SOMEWHAT TO LEFT OF CENTER TO BALANCE TWO ELDERLY CONSERVATIVES.

3. ACCORDING MINSTATE SA'ID, COMMISSION WILL MOVE SLOWLY IN COMPLEX WORK OF DRAWING UP ROLLS. CONSEQUENTLY NEW ELECTIONS WILL NOT BE HELD FOR QUITE A FEW MONTHS. NOW THAT INTERNAL SITUATION HAS QUIETED, WE BELIEVE THAT PRESIDENT HAMDI AND COMMAND COUNCIL OBVIOUSLY WANT SEVERAL MONTHS TO ACCELEARATE REFORM PROGRAM AND TO FURTHER EXPAND CENTRAL GOVERNMENTS CONTROL OVER COUNTRYSIDE AT EXPENSE OF SHAIKHS. NEW SYSTEM OF DIRECT ELECTIONS, IN CONTRAST TO OLD ELABORATE INDIRECT SYSTEM WHICH FAVORED SHAIKHS, IT EXPECTED TO REDUCE TRIBAL DOMINATION OF ASSEMBLY. AT SAME TIME, THERE IS DANGER OF INCREASED LEFTIST REPRESENTATION, ANOTHER REASON, ACCORDING TO SA'ID FOR NOT RUSHING ELECTIONS.

3. MEANWHILE, HAMDI SEEMS TO BE ENJOYING UNPRECEDENTED POPULARITY IN ALL SECTIONS OF COUNTRY. HIS HONESTY AND DEDICATION TO REFORM ARE NOT CHALLENGED AND HIS APPROACH OF DOWNPLAYING HIS PERSONALITY (HE HAS FORBIDDEN ALL PICTURES OF HIMSELF AND OTHER LEADERS) AND HIS UNUSUAL CANDOR IN PUBLIC SPEECHES HAVE HELPED CREATE A FAVORABLE IMAGE. AT SAME TIME, IN HIS HANDRVLING OF EX-PRIMIN AL-AYNI, ABU LUHUMS, AND SHAIKH ABDALLAH AL-AHMAR, HE HAS MADE ABUNDANTLY CLEAR IN PEOPLES MINDS WHO'S IN CHARGE.

4. TWO OTHER CHANGES ARE EXPECTED TO BE IMPLEMENTED AROUND JUNE 13. ONE WILL BE EXPANSION OF PRESENT COMMAND COUNCIL, WHICH IS NOW DOWN EFFECTIVELY TO FOUR MEMBERS (HAMDI, DEPCIC GHASHMI, PARATROOP CO ABD AL-ALIM, AND PRIMIN ABD AL-GHANI), BACK TO CUSTOMARY SEVEN MEMBERS BY ADDING NEW HAMDI LOYALISTS. SECOND WILL BE MINOR RESHUFFLE OF CABINET, MAINLY TO REMOVE UNRELIABLE NOMINAL CC MEMBER, MININT LTC YAHYA AL-MUTAWAKKIL. WE UNDERSTAND MINMUNICIPALITIES NADHIR ALSO CONFIDENTIAL

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LEAVING FOR PERSONAL REASONS.

5. CELEBRATIONS ON JUNE 13 WILL BE RELATIVELY LOW-KEY AND DISTINCTLY NON-MILITARY WITH EMPHASIS ON PARTICIPATION BY YOUTH, WORKERS, AND STUDENTS, ON WHOM HAMDI HAS BEEN WORKING HARD TO INFLUENCE THEM AWAY FROM DOCTINAIRE LEFTISTS. HE IS TO GIVE "IMPORTANT PATRIOTIC SPEECH" AS KEYNOTE OF RALLY.

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FROM OVERTONES IN PRESS WE EXPECT HE MAY EXTEND PRESENT
"TRANSITIONAL PERIOD" DUE TO END JUNE 13 UNTIL ELECTION TIME
AND MAY ANNOUNCE SOME SPECIFIC REFORM MEASURES.

6. WTH FONMIN ASNAG AND MINSTATE SAID CONTINUE TO ACT RELAXED
AND ASSURE US TENSE PERIOD OF CONFRONTATION WITH
CONSERVATIVE SHAIKH ABDALLAH AL-AHMAR IS NOW OVER.

7. IT IS HARD TO IMAGINE COMPLETE ABSENCE OF INTERNAL
MANEUVERINGS WITH YARG. NEVERTHELESS CHANCES OF QUIET
AND STABILITY OVER SHORT AND MEDIUM TERM NOW LOOK VERY
GOOD.
SCOTES

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